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ABSTRACT

In discussing reprogramming as a cultural process, for better intercultural adaptation theory construction, more attention should be paid to macroscopic, motivating, and contextual factors such as the mass media institution. The learning of new cultures from individual systems (e.g., interpersonal interaction) cannot be as efficient or effective as learning from collective or institutional systems. Evidence suggests that while primary or individual systems are capable of mediating the learning of secondary institutional culture, they cannot be as effective, efficient, or comfortable sources of cross-cultural learning as are secondary institutions such as the mass media. As communication resources, the mass media are an institutionalized information, leadership, education, and entertainment service. Accordingly, certain expectations could be drawn, using African students as examples: (1) that the amount of television viewing among African students would be significantly and positively related to cultural adaptation; (2) that Africans students would have a distinctive, if not unique, pattern of television program choice related to cultural value preference; and (3) that African students' amount and type of television viewing would differ from other foreign students. (Two figures are included; 43 references are attached.) (SG)

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Communication and Social Values in Cross Cultural Adjustment: Conceptual Background and Some Propositions

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Communication and Social Values in Cross-Cultural Adjustment: Conceptual Background and Some Proposition

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that for better intercultural adaptation theory construction, more attention should be paid to more macroscopic, motivating and contextual factors such as the mass media institution. It argues that the learning of new culture from individual systems (e.g. interpersonal interaction) cannot be as efficient or effective as learning from collective or institutional systems. It provides further evidence that while primary or individual systems are capable of mediating the learning of secondary institutional culture, they cannot be as effective, efficient, or comfortable sources of cross-cultural learning as are secondary institutions such as the mass media.

Communication and Social Values in Cross-Cultural Adjustment: Conceptual Background and Some Propositions

INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication is normally defined as communication involving interaction between or among persons of different cultures in a context in which cultural factors are significant (Dodd, 1987: 5-6). The rationale for this definition is that individuals are defined by the values they hold and that these values are defined, in turn, by the cultural norms of the individuals' societies of origin. Societies are said to socialize individuals and, in the process, to inculcate them with specific values. These processes are said to be effected through the instrumentality of social institutions which serve as organizing frames for human activities and in doing so establish the ground rules for these activities. Definitions of intercultural communication, therefore, often assume that individuals bring their respective values to the intercultural communication situation which is often assumed to be neutral.

However, except in such very rare contexts as the United Nations in which serious efforts are made to promote the contextual neutrality of interaction, the institutional contexts of intercultural interaction usually favor one set of values over all others; that is, one set of values dominates the context.

Indigenous members of a society learn the values that are dominant in their societal environment through a process of socialization that "involves conditioning and programming in the basic social process of communication" (Tzu, 1984:207). This socialization is effected through the instrumentality of a complex set of primary and secondary "significant others" that include private and public persons and institutions. The system of "programming and conditioning" differs from one society (or cultural community) to another and, when successful, imbues the members of the society with a strong emotional commitment to and identification with the cultural community. Klopf (1987:28), who defines culture as "a learned behavior", points out that most of the "process of learning the culture" takes place early in life. The process never stops, however, because people continually resocialize as they readapt, readjust, reacculturate, or reassimilate to new socio-cultural situations brought about by their constantly but gradually changing cultural environments. The extent to which a person's programming makes him or her "compatible" with or "fit" into the core values of his/her society reflects the extent to which the programming has been successful or effective and, therefore, indexes the person's socio-cultural competence: a summary index of the personal and social capabilities of the programmed individual.

For a person who, for one reason or another, is "suddenly"

thrust into a cultural environment that is significantly different from the one for which he/she was programmed, a quick reprogramming is necessary. Because the earlier programming has, with a great deal of emotional and cognitive involvement, created for the individual a "home world" of familiar culture and patterned ways of understanding and responding (Tzu, 1984:207), the need for and the process of reprogramming may create a host of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral pathologies which is sometimes described as "culture shock."

This article describes reprogramming as a communication process. It discusses briefly the various ways in which communication researchers have conceptualized the major variables and factors associated with the reprogramming process. The article argues that, for better conceptualization and theory construction, more attention should be paid to such macroscopic motivating and contextual factors as the institutional environment and the various sojourning purposes of such cross-cultural sojourners as the international student who has been found to be a special kind of sojourner and especially the African international student who has been found to be a special, if not a unique, kind of sojourner in western societies (Adler, 1975: Furnham and Alibhai, 1986).

REORIENTING CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT STUDIES: AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Conceptual Background

Cultural adjustment (Klopf, 1987:228; Furnham, 1988:42) is only one of several terms used to describe the cognitive, affective, and behavioral transformation which necessarily occurs in people "who are born and raised in one culture...move(d) to another culture for an indefinite stay " (Tzu, 1984:207). Other common terms are adaptation (Kim and Gudykunst, 1988), assimilation (McGuire and McDermott, 1988:90), and acculturation (Klopf, 1987:227; Tzu, 1984:207). Of these four terms, two (adjustment and adaptation) appear to attribute more activity to the individual who is undergoing transformation. The other two terms (assimilation and acculturation) seem, on the other hand, to attribute more passitivity to the individual and to present him/her as an object of influence by external forces. However, except for such efforts as those by Nwanko (1975, 1980) to delineate the different conceptual and behavioral implications of adjustment and assimilation, the literature seems to use these terms synonymously and, therefore, ambiguously. The literature is also ambiguous as to whether these phenomena are processes or states. Tzu (1984:209), for example, calls acculturation "the process of adaptive transformation" and implies that cultural adaptation subsumes acculturation (1984:206) and that "adaptive

change" leads to assimilation (1984:206). Klopf (1987:2228) defines cultural adjustment as "a person's feelings of comfort in the host society" and subscribes to the definition of acculturation as "the act of learning and adjusting to a new set of cultural behaviors that are different from the set first learned" (1987:227). He implies, thus, that acculturation leads to "feelings of comfort." His conceptualization parallels that by Taft (1988:150; Kim and Gudykunst, 1988:11) who sees cultural adaptation as subsuming assimilation which he describes as progressing through seven stages that begin with "culture learning" and end with "congruence." Berry, Kim, and Boski (1988:62; Kim and Gudykunst, 1988:11), on the other hand, see assimilation as one of four types of acculturation that also include "integration, rejection, and marginality."

Added to the problems of this definitional quagmire is the distinctive psychological, organismic, microscopic orientation of most communication and cross-cultural adaptation studies. Thus, despite the recognition by Kim and Gudykunst (1988:9-10) that early studies of acculturation, especially by anthropologists, were microscopic in orientation and by Kim (in Gudykunst and Kim ,1984:20) that intercultural communication can be studied either on the group or individual level, their orientation is clearly psychological (Kim and Gudykunst, 1988). The psychological orientation of this tradition of research has not, however,

prevented its exclusion of biophysiological factors of communication and adjustment which the fields of psychology and communication disorders emphasize (Haber and Runyon, 1984; Curtis, 1978).

With all these conceptual problems, it is not surprising that some researchers who attempt to develop a theory of cultural adaptation do not define the term but satisfy themselves with only specifying the kinds of situation in which adaptation takes place (example: Ruben, 1983:142). It is also not surprising that researchers have difficulty defining cultural or intercultural communication competence (Chen, 1990:243-47; Taft, 1988:160; Klopf, 1987:228).

Taft (1988:160) proposed, for instance, that "the ability to perform the necessary skills in order to adapt to a culture is a prerequisite for satisfactory adjustment" and that "acculturation may be represented as the acquisition of the appropriate cultural skills." He concluded that cultural competence may best be defined in terms of its "external manifestations." Klopf (1987:228), on his part, says that cultural competence "indicates a willingness to learn the language and increase one's knowledge base about the adopted culture," adding that "positive attitudes about the culture and feelings of self confidence are indicators of competence." Chen (1990:257), after reviewing some approaches to the conceptualization and study of intercultural communication

competence, concluded that "to be competent in intercultural interaction, individuals must communicate effectively and appropriately." Acknowledging serious conceptualization problems, Chen (1990:257-58) encouraged further research "to adopt a broader range of dimensions and components for the study of intercultural communication competence" (1990:258).

Some definitional problems are also associated with the study of adjustment and adaptation from the perspectives of the fields of psychology and human communication disorders. However, because these perspectives focus clearly on individual-level analyses and on specific situations and conditions, their problems are not as intractable as those of the cultural and cross-cultural perspectives. Psychological studies of adjustment tend to focus on the problems of "growing accustomed to or learning to live with" an unchanging and unchangeable circumstance or of coping "with everchanging circumstances" (Haber and Runyon, 1984:2-10). Human communication disorder studies of adjustment and competence tend, on the other hand, to focus on the problems of coping with neuromuscular handicaps that impair the encoding and decoding of speech to produce disorders of language, speech, and hearing.

It is clear, therefore, that as one moves from the biophysiological, through the psychological, to the cultural levels of analysis, one finds that the study of human adjustment

becomes increasingly complex, with the number of variables/levels of analysis increasing additively and the dimensions of interaction among the levels/variables increasingly geometrically. An important example is that a person whose neuromuscular impairment negatively affects the efficiency of acoustic signal generation and/or decoding is likely to be affected across various situations. In contrast, a person's maladjustment or imperfect socialization in one culture may facilitate his/her adjustment in another culture in that he/she may see neither of the cultures as, to quote Berger and Luckman with Tzu (1984:207), "the only existent and conceivable world."

Given the discussions above, we make the following suggestions for the re-orientation of communication and cross-cultural adjustment research:

1. The level of emphasis should, in fact, be socio-cultural. This is because the proper understanding of cross-cultural adaptation should begin with the delineation of the core values of the host and guest cultures and on how these core values are reflected in the major institutions of socialization and in the socio-cultural cognitions, identifications, and behavioral orientations of human groups and collectivities.

2. Emphasis should, in fact, be on the symbolic or communicative dimensions of adaptation. Because cross-cultural adaptation is a form of socialization, an understanding of the

cognitive and affective relations (co-orientation) between groups and the major institutions or agencies of socialization is crucial to the understanding of the process (Nwanko, 1979). So also is the understanding of the patterns of knowledge of those institutions and their instrumental usage as resources of public communication and information by members of groups needing adaptation. For example, the discomfort of new cross-cultural experiences could be more usefully studied from the perspective of macroscopic reifications of the principles of cognitive dissonance, cognitive consistency, information, and communication behavior (Festinger, 1957; Wyer, 1974; and Abelson, et al., 1968) than from such perspectives of "culture shock" as those suggested by such definitions as "feeling of helplessness, even terror or anger" (Klopf, 1987:222) or as quoted by Hall (1984:226) "a form of personality maladjustment." The cognitive and communication conflict basis of "culture shock" is evident in Hall's (1984:226) description of it as resulting from:

> "...the shifting of the self-world relationships (which) brings about heightened levels of consciousness through an increased awareness of the split between inner subjective experiences and external objective circumstances...the painful discrepancy between what is and what should be..."

In this sense, culture shock is a most intense form of communicative dissonance that involves not just some specific instances of perceptual incongruity but also the perceived and

actual askewness of the entire institutional complex and the core values that support it. In other words, the core values and institutions that are supposed to anchor "the individual in society" are present but are not properly functional.

A Theoretical Framework

Most intercultural contact analyses consider the perpetuation of this kind of incongruous value dominance to be the cause of the sojourner's or immigrant's intense discomfort while participating in and learning the communication system of the host culture. Sojourners and immigrants, therefore, are said to find themselves in various stages of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Furnham, and Bochner, 1986; Regis, 1989: 58-59):

> ....the maintenance of the native ways and adoption of new ways (integration), the discarding of the old ways and the adoption of the new ways (assimilation), the maintenance of the native ways and rejection of the new ways (separation), and the rejection of both the old and the new ways (marginalization).

The intensity of the sojourner's discomfort and the category in which he or she ultimately ends up are said to be determined by a host of personality, demographic, and cultural factors which Regis (1989:75) summarized as motivating and facilitating contextual conditions. Regis (1989:75) also suggested media exposure opportunity, exposure frequency and periodicity (length of typical exposure periods), communication content type (whether

supportive or destructive), and communication-seeking effort as some of the significant communication variables that may impact on the immigrant's (or sojourner's) native-host cultural interaction outcomes. Regis' (1989) analysis, which focuses on communication and the development of an immigrant (sense of) community, sees the adjustment of an individual immigrant to a host culture as cushioned by a system of primary (personal and community) and secondary (professional) networks which prevent the immigrant from sudden, intense, and sustained exposure to an alien (host) culture which may result in severe culture shock (Furnham and Bochner, 1986).

There is no guarantee, however, that the 'cushioning' role of the extant or emergent community will produce optimally positive results either for the immigrant group or for the individual immigrant. While the cushioning may prevent the trauma of culture shock, loss of ethnic identity, and self-denigration, it can also slow the immigrant's personal growth and exacerbate his or her identity conflict. It may even lead to intergroup conflict and mutual segregation between the immigrant and host communities (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:24-25). This means that to be optimally useful to the immigrant and his or her community, the primary and secondary networks and their interrelationships must be organized and managed carefully and effectively. This, in turn, requires that the immigrant community develop such quasi-

secondary institutions as community media and community organizations to mediate the relations between the primary and secondary networks (or cultures) because primary (native or ethnic) and secondary (host media such as network television) media and organizations play different roles for the members of the community (Nwanko, 1982). Primary community institutions generally serve cultural value preservation purposes, while secondary community organization serve cultural value expansion purposes.

Just as there are different types of community institutions, there are different types of immigrants and sojourners (Mitchell, 1986; Furnham and Bochner, 1986). Furnham and Bochner (1986) reported that immigrants' differences on such variables as "..sex, age at time of migration, time spent in the host society, and education are the factors in predicting the immigrant's language competence, acculturation motivation and accessibility to host communication channels" (p.222). Therefore, the individual immigrant should use the institutional resources of the immigrant and host communities in a manner that best satisfies his or her goals and need, as suggested by the uses and gratifications paradigm (Black and Whitney, 1983:55). The uses and gratifications paradigm is an offshoot of structural-functionalism and focuses on the investigation of how and why people use the media rather than on how and why the media use

people, the concern of the structural-functional paradigm. In relation to the issue at hand, it does not seem to matter much whether the focus is on the mass media or on the people, or even whether the mass media, like other social institutions, sometimes serve dysfunctional purposes as has often been made clear (Littell, 1976). What seems to matter more is that the mass media are a public institutional resource that (a) provides information and exposure to people about normative personalities and events in their environment; (b) enforces norms by persuasion and by exposing and critiquing deviance; (c) widens the base of common cultural experience through socialization and social integration; and (d) creates mass culture through mass entertainment (Schramm, 1971:34-37). These four institutional media services or modes of public influence are not mutually exclusive, although each type is governed by specific culturally determined communication rules and processes based on situational factors and the goals of those in communication (Nwanko and Idowu, 1983:4). In other words, some specific media organizations may place more emphasis on particular functional services than some others, just as some specific individuals may place more emphasis on seeking gratification from particular services rather than from others. It is possible, therefore, that a service or institutional organization that is functional at one level (example: the individual or primary network level) may be concurrently

dysfunctional at another level (example, secondary network).

Intercultural sojourners and migrants also differ along several dimensions: region or culture of origin (example, African, Asian, European), primary purpose of sojourn or migration (example, study, volunteer work, diplomacy, refuge), length and permanence of sojourn (example, short-term, extended, permanent), and such demographic variables as age, socio-economic status, gender. These differences point to different needs and, therefore, differences in what are proper and optimal uses of the variety of institutional resources (including the mass media) should be. An individual migrant needs, therefore, to understand the host culture at its various levels: general societal (secondary), 'ethnic' community (primary), and the more microscopic personal and interpersonal (primary) levels.

The notions of society as a symbolic system of interconnected personal and institutional subsystems (primary and secondary groups) and of human civilization as the co-existence of differences and commonalities among individuals, among groups, among societies, and among cultures are consistent with the premises and assumptions of communication as symbolic interaction. Symbolic interaction sees social and institutional interaction as "the very fabric of society" (Denton, 1982:21), symbols as "the foundations of life as well as human interaction," and meanings for symbols as derived from

"interaction in rather specific social contexts" (Denton, 1982:23). Because symbolic interaction sees a person's social reality as made up of a symbol system comprised of the person's knowledge of the outside world, the person's inner private world, and a shared "world of beliefs, experiences, and meanings generated and maintained through communication" (Denton, 1982:23), it sees new interaction experiences as capable of resulting "in 'new' symbols or 'new' meanings for 'old' symbols which may consequently change the person's understanding of the world" (Denton, 1982:23). Also, because symbolic interaction sees the 'mind', the 'self', and the 'society' as so intertwined as to be incapable of independent definitions, it sees 'self' to be always a social self created through the learning (by socialization and resocialization) of social values as reflected in significant social roles and institutions.

Formal and informal networks of roles, as constituted and manifested in primary and secondary institutional arrangements and collective patterns of behavior, form the context in which the individual learns these values and tries them out in concrete behaviors. The capacity for knowledge - to acquire, evaluate, store, retrieve and use symbols and information purposively - is central to the idea of society as a symbolic system (Nwanko, 1971:201-208). This is, therefore, also central to the idea of socialization, resocialization or adaptation.

Although the individual, the community, and the society at large - that is the personal and the primary and secondary institutional subsystems of society - are strongly interrelated (Figure 1), they do not have absolute correlations. The individual is the smallest and most particularistic subunit of (the symbolic system of) society. This minimal unit defines the self and the individual personality by its symbolic content, structure, and process.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The primary institutional system which expects of the individual a total and consummatory identification to its values, provides the basic context for the individual's mostly instrumental (that is for effecting adaptation or other such goals) learning of and identification with the secondary institutional system contains and formalizes those most general of values that organize the variety of primary groups and institutions into a society. Thus, we see a pattern of increasing generality or commonality of values from the individual system, through the primary institutional system, to the secondary institutional system. Conversely, there is an increasing particularism from the secondary, through the primary institutional, to the individual system. The individual or

personal system, thus, forms the apex of an inverted pyramidal symbolic and value structure of numerous personal systems, several primary institutional systems, and one all-encompassing secondary institutional systems, which, therefore, can be said to contain the basic principles of society's culture. The implications of this structure for culture learning, a necessary condition for adaptation, are significant:

1. The learning of a new culture from individual or personal systems as in interpersonal interaction cannot be as effective or efficient as learning from collective (that is institutional) systems.

2. Primary institutions, while capable of mediating the learning of secondary institutional culture, cannot be as effective or efficient source of cross-cultural learning as are secondary institutions.

A secondary institution, like the mass media (e.g. television), being an efficient repertoire of society's cultural principles, should be an effective point of departure for cross-cultural learning and adaptation. Such an institutional use of television by African students in the United States is modelled in Figure 2 and is detailed in a study reported by Onwumechili (1990) and explored empirically in this paper.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

In summary, we point out that, as communication resources, the mass media are an institutionalized information, leadership, education, and entertainment service. These functional services are not mutually exclusive because information affects the cognitive basis of behavior and is, therefore, persuasive; education is an acculturating force (Gordon, 1971:165) that requires the propagation of particular values and has, therefore, informational and persuasive dimensions; entertainment is often a source of new insights and understandings of the environment (Schramm, 1971:37) and has, therefore, persuasive and informational dimensions, especially in its mass culture form (Gordon, 1971:96-114). It is similarly necessary to point out that although intercultural sojourners and migrants differ in their geographical attributes and personalities, they also share various degrees of common characteristics, even if only as members of the human civilization. The same argument applies to their use of communication resources.

AFRICAN STUDENTS IN THE USA AS A CASE IN POINT

International students are a special kind of intercultural sojourners. A sojourn is often thought to be a temporary stay in

a new and unfamiliar environment; the length of stay and the motive for the journey are usually left unspecified (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:112). International study and student exchange programs focused, as did the early studies of international student behavior, on the economic progress of and the diffusion of innovations to the students' home countries, the development of mutual understanding and friendly attitudes between the students' home and host countries, and the mental health of foreign students. However, because of "the tendency of the brighter students to either not return to their country of origin after completing their studies or to emigrate soon after returning from abroad" and because "the world in the 1980s (and 90s) presents a different picture," research on foreign students has shifted to culture-learning, ethnic identity, social and cross-national networks of students, and the mediating role of the networks (especially the mass media) in bridging various cultures (Furnham and Bochner, 1986: 114-5).

Among the foreign students in western societies, Africans seem to be a special, if not a unique, group. Cultural distance studies (Adler, 1975; Furnham and Alibhai, 1986) found that Africans were far more culturally distant from their host western cultural group than any other foreign cultural group. This immense cultural distance has led to social punishment, within the host culture, during the African's attempt to adapt. An early

study by Carey (1956:145) noted, for instance, that although both Asians and Africans have favorable and unfavorable stereotypes, "it is significant that of the stereotypes about Asians, some at least are unqualifiedly favorable; while those about Africans are favorable only in a highly patronizing way, and hence unacceptable to African students." Carey (1956: 145) continued:

> ....Asians are 'highly civilized', 'very brainy', philosophers who often perform truly astounding feats of memory; but they are also 'treacherous', cunning and cruel: 'you can't trust any of them.' Africans, on the other hand, are either 'savage' and 'primitive', with enormous sexual powers, or alternatively kind, loyal darkies, childlike and grateful for any kindness bestowed upon them...

African students have also been found to have faced ridicules that ranged from "you have a funny accent" to "that is definitely rude, where are you from?" All foreign students in Britain, in general, have been found to have unanticipated difficulties that include emotional, academic, and adjustment problems. However, the common causes of psychological stress for African students in Britain have been found to include racial discrimination, language and adjustment and sexual problems, study-method discrepancies, misunderstanding and mistrust, over-identification, ethnocentrism, employment problems and financial stress (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:120). A similar study of Africans in the United States (Veroff, 1963) found "that African students became intolerant of what they perceived to be insincere

outgoingness. They also tended to change their views of Africa, becoming more nationalistic and to be more achievement-oriented than prior to their arrival" (Furnham and Bochner, 1986: 121). Social punishment, as Albert Bandura (1977) theorized, is more likely to lead to withdrawal or slow or stunted social learning. Therefore, it is logical that those who withdraw as the Africans are forced to do (e.g becoming more 'nationalistic'), will come to rely on a medium such as television (devoid of direct social punishment) which can be vicariously substituted for other overt types of socio-cultural learning.

As indicated in studies by Carey (1956) and Veroff (1963), researchers have sought solutions to these problems by studying student adjustment to host cultures but mostly from the perspectives of increasing social network and friendship bonds as well as changing student attitudes (Spaulding et al, 1976). Pruitt (1978) studied the adaptation of African students on American campuses from a perspective. This perspective generally follows the stereotypical, trait, and behavioral approaches of most conventional communication competence research. These approaches focus either on the subjects' mental, psychological, and communication style (or trait) as perceived by an observer or the subjects' goal-achievement and communication skills as inferred from the subjects' behavior (Sypher, 1984:108-9). The perspective defines competence on the basis of some fixed and

culture-bound behavioral skills and 'performance' criteria without considering the socio-cultural foundations of the criteria and of communication goal-setting.

In contrast to this perspective, the constructionist approach focuses on social construal processes and the development of differentiated strategic behavior repertoires; that is, on the acquisition and use of knowledge of dominant social communication rules and the strategic use of that knowledge (Sypher, 1984:112). This perspective can, therefore, be said to have recognized the central role of culture in determining and defining competence: culture specifies knowledge and the situationally bound rules for its use. The perspective sees socio-cultural knowledge which includes repertoires of behavior as shared community property which serves as data and context for the individual's psychological and performance abilities (Cooley and Roach, 1984:25-29). This means that "before we can test individuals' competence, we must look to the society to see what the content of that knowledge is " (Cooley and Roach, 1984:30). Public institutions especially those described as agencies of socialization, are good sources of this kind of knowledge.

The mass media, known to be reflectors and transmitters of societal culture and, therefore, powerful agents of socialization, especially in media-rich societies, should be

looked at as important sources of this socio-cultural knowledge. The mass media are said (a) to "create the indirect effect of treating and promoting social models" (Dodd, 1987:166), (b) to be "major tools in the transmission of culture" at the contemporary and historical levels as a "part of the individual's experience, knowledge, and accumulated learning " (Black and Whitney, 1988:24), (c) to serve "to communicate information, values and norms from one generation to another or from the members of a society to newcomers (Severin with Tankard, 1988:218), and (d) to help people to "adapt to the values and norms of their communities and institutions " (Black and Whitney, 1988:63). It is, therefore, "surprising that the mass media have not been systematically studied as a significant part of the adjustment process of international students" (Nwanko and Onwumechili, 1990: p. 9). This is especially surprising because there is an adjustment stage hypothesis which suggests initial heavy dependence on the mass media by persons with limited opportunities for social contact who substitute the media for companionship (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:131; Black and Whitney, 1988:55). These stages of the adjustment process have led to the U-curve (Lysgaard, 1955) and W-curve (Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1963) hypotheses. There is also a social-support hypothesis of adjustment which involves the sojourner's contacts and interactions with primary monocultural (native culture) networks,

secondary bicultural (native/host culture) networks, and tertiary, multicultural (professional/worldwide) networks (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:128). In essence, the significance of the mass media may lie on their use as companions in an early stage of cultural adaptation as the immigrant or sojourner seeks to go through the stages of adaptation to perhaps assimilation.

If one focuses on African students in the United States and the role of television in their cultural adaptation, one will have to take into account 1) the significant cultural distance that earlier cultural distance studies (Furnham and Alibhai, 1986) have established to separate African students from other foreign students; 2) African students as a distinctively unique sojourner group; and ofcourse 3) such other variables as age of entry into the host society and years of residence, in light of previous findings such as the one by Howe (1983: 115) that ". . . newer immigrants are more likely to look toward television to learn about the new culture than are established immigrants."

With that type of focus, one is likely to conclude with the following expectations and propositions:

1. That the amount of television viewing among African students would be significantly and positively related to culturally adaptation. This expectation is strongly supported by the conclusions by Furnham and Bochner (1986:131); Black and Whitney (1983:55); and Howe (1983:115) that new immigrants, because of their limited opportunities for social contacts in a host culture, have heavy dependence on the mass media.

2. Because the uses and gratifications paradigm argues that values determine choice of television programs (Black and Whitney, 1983:55), one would expect African students to have a distinctive, if not a unique, pattern of television program choice and that this choice will be related significantly to their cultural value preference.

3. On a similar basis, one would expect African students to differ significantly from other foreign students in amount and type of television viewing and that age of entry into the United States, as well as length of residence, would be more significant for African students than for other foreign students in terms of their relevance to ease of cultural adjustment.

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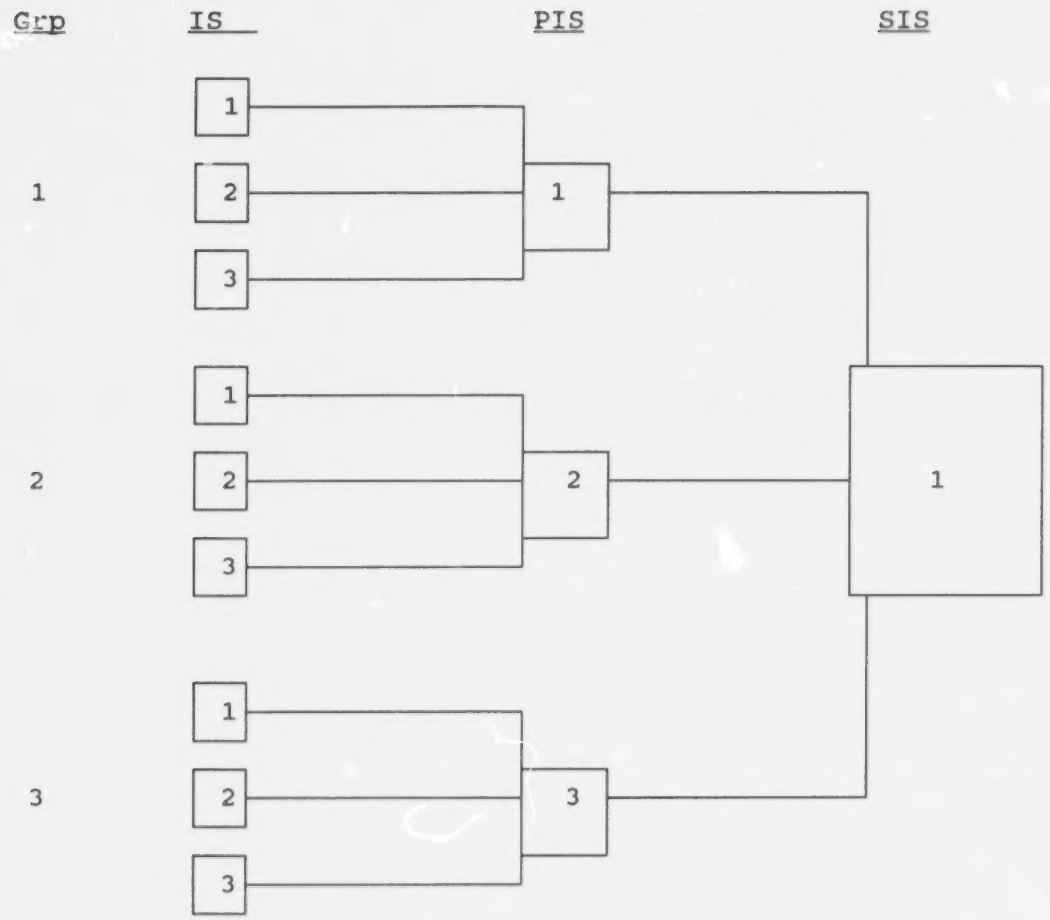

Legend

G = Cultural group
IS = Individual or personal symbolic systems (e.g intra/interpersonal)
PIS = Primary institutional systems (Community publications, radio etc.)
SIS = Secondary institutional systems (e.g television)

Note. The content of each symbolic system is knowledge of societal values and norms.

Figure 1. The symbolic systems of society: institutional perspective.

Figure 2. Cultural reprogramming or adaptation in a host western culture: Social institutional perspective.